

158. They say ‘We did kill the Messiah Jesus son of Mary the Messenger of Allah;’ whereas they slew him not nor crucified him but he was made to appear to them so; and those who differ therein are certainly doubtful about it; they have no certain knowledge thereof but only follow a conjecture; and they definitely did not kill him.

The emphasis is upon their failure to murder Jesus by any means. The reader is reminded that the very beginning of the verse refers to the Jewish boast that they had succeeded in murdering Jesus.

This Jewish claim is firmly rejected by *The Holy Quran*. That is why by the end of the verse, the conclusive declaration is that whatever may have happened they certainly failed to kill him. This implies that it is not the act of crucifixion which is denied. What is denied is death by crucifixion.

This verse rejects the false claim of the Jews in their saying that ‘We killed the Christ. Although they did not slay him, nor succeed in crucifying him. *بُوْصِلَ* does not just mean crucifying but to achieve their objective to crucify him. There are many who are crucified and are brought down alive.¹ When they die it is never said that they were crucified. The final conclusion drawn by this verse is that they definitely did not succeed in killing the Christ.

وَلَكِنْ شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ: the word *شُبِّهَ* in the text must be carefully studied. The context of the preceding text would not permit the implied reference to any other than Jesus or alternatively it could refer to the incident in general. In conformity with the rules of grammar the implied pronoun in the word *شُبِّهَ* can refer to none other than Jesus Christ himself. This means that it was he who was obscured and made to appear to them similar to someone else. Hence as Jesus was hung upon the cross he hung in the likeness of someone else. Evidently the denial is not that of crucifixion or apparent death thereupon but the denial is death by crucifixion. There certainly was great confusion as to what actually happened. So the verse continues to build the scenario of the confusion and doubt. All else is nothing but conjecture. That is the final conclusion.

If the word refers to the incident as such, this would point to the divergent claims of the two disputing parties as to what had happened. Neither of the parties were certain of the validity of their claims. For instance the Christian belief of Jesus' death by crucifixion and later resurrection was not based on any tangible grounds but was merely conjectural. Likewise the Jewish claim of Jesus' death upon the cross was no less conjectural. Hence their appeal to Pilate for the possession of Jesus' body. In fact they clearly expressed their doubts regarding the entire episode of his so-called death and warned Pilate that in the likelihood of his survival he might reappear in public claiming that he had risen from the dead:

Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After 3 days I will rise again.

Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.²

¹ See Ahmad, Mirza Tahir – Khalifatul Masih IV. *‘Survival Cases’*. Christianity – A Journey From Facts to Fiction. (Islam International Publications Ltd, 1994, 1996). 108 – 111.

² *The Holy Bible*. Matthew 27: 63, 64.

It is to this that the last part of the verse under study refers, when it says **وَالَّذِينَ**. Certainly those who differ about it (or about him as to what actually befell him) were themselves in doubt.

شُبَّهَ لَهُمْ is misinterpreted to mean that another person looking like him was crucified although this is categorically rejected by the Arabic idiom otherwise the person who disguised himself to look like the Christ should be mentioned. **شُبَّهَ لَهُمْ** clearly means that they were uncertain and fell into doubt about the case. As is written by Imam Razi in the commentary on this verse.³

159. Nay! Allah exalted him to Himself. Allah is the Almighty the Wise.

بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ [‘Allah exalted him to Himself’] - the majority of orthodox Muslims infer from this part of the verse that the connotation of **بَلْ** refers to the act of crucifixion i.e., instead of letting him die upon the cross, God rescued him by raising him bodily to somewhere in the heavens. As such he should be living somewhere in space in the same corporeal form that he possessed prior to the attempt of his crucifixion. This interpretation raises many difficult questions, mainly:

- (a) If Jesus was not crucified at all, is the entire history of crucifixion emphatically denied and the whole episode just a fiction or delusion suffered by the Jews, the Christians and the Romans alike?
- (b) Where in the verse is the claim that Jesus was raised bodily to heavens? All that is mentioned simply is that Allah exalted him to Himself.

As to the first question the orthodox build a fantastic scenario according to which the fact of crucifixion itself is not denied but it is claimed that the person who was crucified was not Jesus but someone else who was given the likeness of Jesus by some angels at the command of God. Hence the doubts and conjectures were about the identity of the person who was crucified. Evidently this explanation creates only more problems than it solves. Moreover the entire tale is absolutely without foundation. No scriptural evidence or evidence based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him) is ever presented to support this bizarre claim which simply adds more conjectural confusion.

It is as if this explanation of the verse dawned only upon the medieval scholars while the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, remained himself completely unaware of it.

As to the second question the weakness of the claim is apparent from the wording of *The Holy Quran*. The word **رَفَعَ** means elevated. Whenever Allah elevates a person the elevation always refers to the status of the person, never to his body. In fact it is impossible to translate this verse in any way other than the said meaning i.e., the elevation of the spiritual station.

The verse declares that Allah elevated Jesus to Himself. Evidently no point in space of Heaven is mentioned to which Allah raised him. He raised him to Himself while He was present there where Jesus was. No place in Heaven or earth is empty of Allah's presence. So when someone is said to be raised to Him, a bodily movement is impossible and inconceivable. According to Ahmadiyya understanding of this verse, the connotation of 'on the contrary'⁴ refers to the Jewish claim of the accursed death of Jesus. Obviously the opposite of curse is nearness to God.

³ Razi, Fakhr al-Dīn, *Tafsir al-Kabir: Maḥatib al-Ghayb*.

⁴ Sher Ali, Maulawi. *The Holy Quran*, (Holland 1955).

This verse refutes the claim of certain scholars that Jesus Christ was elevated to the heavens. The verse clearly states that **بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ**. The question arises as which place is empty of Allah towards which the Christ was raised? The reality is that where the Christ was there was also God. So **رَفَعَ** points to the exaltation of his status.

160. For there is none among the People of the Book but will believe in it before his death; and on Doomsday, he shall be a witness against them —

This verse has been the subject of controversy regarding its real import. Some scholars believe that it refers to a remote future in relation to the time of the crucifixion indicating that all Jews without exception will one day have faith in Jesus Christ and accept him as a true Prophet of God. They claim that it is also mentioned in this verse that this miracle would take place in the lifetime of Jesus Christ. This they infer from the words **قَبْلَ وَتَيْمَمَ** which means before his death.

As the Jews have not yet accepted him, therefore, according to such scholars Jesus must be still alive.

Another commonly held view is that the expression refers to every member of the Jewish faith of the time of Jesus Christ. In this case this would mean that every Jew would believe in Jesus Christ before his death – a claim which can only be verified by God.

Unfortunately many problems and difficulties stand in the way of accepting these propositions in toto.

We propose a completely different and new solution to the problem. The verse under study is translated as ‘there is no *one* among the People of the Book but will certainly believe in him before his death.’⁵

The word in italics i.e., ‘one’ is not literally mentioned in the verse but is only implied. If it were mentioned the verse would mean as follows: *For there is none among the People of the Book.*

The word in italics is the implied word. We suggest that instead of *Aḥad* being implied we should consider the word *farīq* as the implied word. In that case the translation would be: ‘There is no sect or group from among the People of the Book but will have faith in him (Jesus Christ) before his death.’

This requires that Jesus must have migrated to the lands occupied by the lost tribes of Israel and in doing so he fulfilled his mission of delivering his message to all the 12 flocks of the house of Israel. This view is further powerfully supported by a Prophecy of Jesus Christ wherein he claimed that he would go in search of the lost sheep of the house of Israel: *But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*⁶

إِنْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ can carry two implications: 1: that there is not a single one among the People of the Book who would not have believed in him before his death – 2: that there is not a single group of people among the People of the Book who would not have believed in him before his death and this is indeed so. If the first implication is taken to mean the death of the Christ then it is just a mere claim. Tens of millions of Jews died without having believed in him before their death, nor having believed in Christ before his death. The theme of the groups seems apt because Jesus Christ passed away after having migrated to the Lost Tribes when certain people from among every one of these Lost Tribes had accepted him and this took place in Kashmir.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *The Holy Bible*. Matthew 15: 24.

[Tarjumatul Quran on Surah al-Nisa](#) [The Women]: 158 – 160, (21st June 1995).
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